

Mike's Bridge Lesson



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What do you bid — part 2

This month is the second of a four-part quiz. You are the opening bidder in all cases, but be careful to note what seat you are in. Assume none vulnerable.

What do you open?

4. You are the dealer and you hold:

♠A J 8 7 4 3 ♥A 10 8 7 4 ♦5 ♣3
 West North East South
 ?

Answer:

Open 1♠. In last month's issue, I showed you a 12 high-card-point hand that had nice distribution, and suggested that you pass it. This was the hand:

♠K ♥K 9 7 6 4 ♦A Q 9 5 4 2 ♣8.

The reason for passing is that you have a difficult shape that is awkward to describe. No. 4 is a 9-point hand, has excellent shape that you can easily bid, and it has two aces. Any player who has been faced with an awkward shape in the bidding knows that this 9-point hand is a clear opening bid. Even the rule of 20 tells you to open this hand. (The rule of 20 gets lucky now and then.)

5. You are in third seat and you hold:

♠Q 8 3 ♥4 3 ♦K 8 7 3 ♣K Q J 9
 West North East South
 Pass Pass ?

Answer:

In third seat, almost anything goes. There still are, however, standards that you have to meet. This hand fails to meet some of these standards. A good general rule of thumb is that if

you open with light values, you have to be prepared to pass if partner bids something at the one level. If you rebid, your partner will expect you to have normal values. If you bid 1♣ or 1♦, you will often be faced with a 1♥ bid by partner. The rule says that if you bid something now, it shows a full opener. If you rebid 1NT, you promise 12–14 high-card points.

This hand is not worth 12 points. In fact, in some ways it's not worth 11 (two queens and one jack with no aces). If you rebid 1NT, your partner will raise to 2NT when he has a maximum pass — you don't rate to make it and it probably won't even be close. If you had one more heart and one fewer diamond, bidding 1♣ would be an acceptable choice. You would pass partner's 1♥ or 1♠ bid and now he knows that you have a dog. After that, he would likely end up in an acceptable contract at the one level.

6. You are in fourth seat and you hold:

♠2 ♥Q 9 7 6 4 ♦Q J ♣A Q 7 6 4
 West North East South
 Pass Pass Pass ?

Answer:

It is tempting to open this hand. The rule of 20 says you should. Good judgment, however, should cause you to think twice. If you open 1♥, there are many ways for the bidding to go out of control. Here are bids partner can make:

1♠ — If partner bids 1♠, you will rebid 2♣. From this point on, there are many bids you do not want to

hear your partner make. Among them are 2♥, putting you in a bad 5–2 fit, or 2♠, a contract in which your hand decreases in value.

1NT — You may escape here because your partner won't often get you too high, but if the bidding becomes competitive, you won't like it unless you find a good fit.

2♣ — You have great clubs, but little else.

2♦ — At least he has a long diamond suit with 10 or more points and you have a partial fit for him.

2♥ — It is good that he can raise, but the bidding will likely be competitive and you won't enjoy defending with this hand. It is true that some good things can happen.

If you insist on opening 1♥, you may survive, but you will be nervous until the auction is over. □